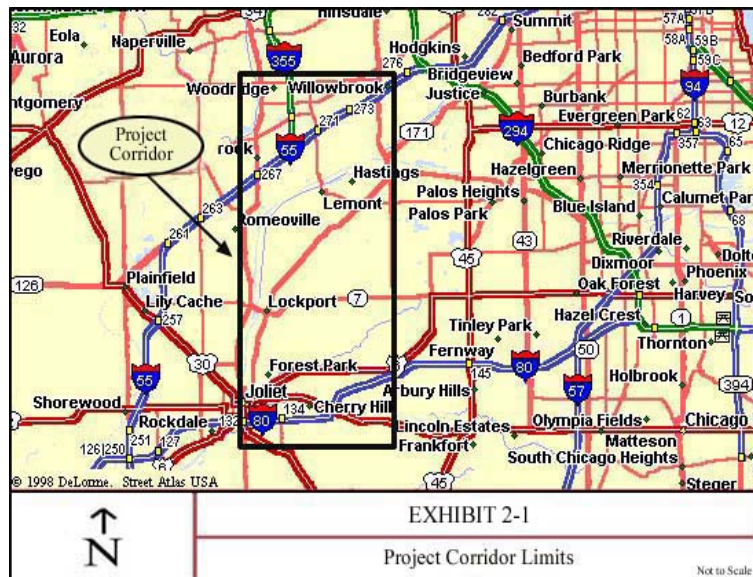


2.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment was inventoried as part of preparing the FAP 340, Final Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (1996 FEIS). This section updates that inventory. All resource categories inventoried in the 1996 FEIS are addressed. Only substantive change occurring to those resources since publication of the 1996 FEIS are documented. In the case where no substantive change to a resource category has occurred, the reader is referred to the [1996 FEIS, Affected Environment](#).

2.1 Project Corridor

The Project Corridor is located within north central Will County, with small portions extending into southern DuPage and southwestern Cook Counties (Exhibit 2-1). The Project Corridor crosses twelve municipal and township political subdivisions, the largest being the City of Joliet (77,217) and the Village of Lemont (40,843). Other political subdivisions include Homer, DuPage, Lockport, Joliet, and New Lenox Townships in Will County, as well as the western two-thirds of Lemont Township in Cook County and the southern one half of Downers Grove Township in DuPage County. These political subdivisions range in population from 20,000 to 77,000. Over 70 percent of the Project Corridor is within Will County. Currently, the political subdivisions of Will County located within the Project Corridor account for 10 percent of Will County's land area and over 60 percent of its population ([U.S. Census, 1990](#)).



The Project Corridor can be characterized as suburban/rural area within the urban fringe. Land within the Project Corridor is undergoing rapid growth including development within existing municipalities, municipal expansion through annexation and development in-fill.

As is true for most areas on the edge of a major metropolitan area, the pace of area development has increased rapidly over the past 10 years. A strong economy, moderate housing prices and close proximity to regional job centers within the City of Chicago and adjacent to O'Hare Airport are primary market forces driving Project Corridor development. Accommodating growth in an orderly fashion has and continues to be a priority of local government. All land within the Project Corridor falls under the control of a county or municipal land use plan and/or zoning ordinance.

Based on 1990 U.S. Census data, the local economy is dominated by the service and retail sectors, these account for over 50 percent of total employment and payroll within

12/18/00

Will County. The Project Corridor population consists predominately of white middle-class families. Minority populations important to area diversity reside predominantly within the City of Joliet on the Project Corridor's southwest fringe.

In sum, the Project Corridor is experiencing rapid growth. Market forces including moderate housing prices and proximity to job centers are driving this growth. The location, type and density of this growth is regulated by local land use plans and zoning and is proceeding in a manner consistent with local priorities. Refer to [1996 FEIS, Section 2.3.1](#) for additional Project Corridor background.

2.2 Transportation Facilities

2.2.1 Roadway Facilities

Existing Roadway Facilities

Expressways in the Chicago region are oriented in a radial network to accommodate travel demand to and from the City of Chicago. Two circumferential beltways interconnect this radial system. The first beltway, I-294 is located an approximate radial distance of 24 kilometers (15 miles) from downtown Chicago. The second beltway, I-290/I-355, is located a radial distance of 39 kilometers (24 miles) from the City of Chicago (Exhibit 2-2). These beltways serve circumferential traffic demand primarily in the north-south direction and through trips seeking to bypass congestion in the downtown area.

I-294 provides a continuous beltway from I-94 in the north to I-80/94 in the south. I-290/I-355 provides a partial beltway from Lake-Cook Road to the north to I-55 in the south. The I-290/I-355 beltway terminates at the north boundary of the Project Corridor.

Two east/west interstates, I-55 and I-80, serve the Project Corridor, although I-55 is a north-south route outside the Project Corridor. I-55 is connected to the I-290/I-355 beltway at the north limit of the Project Corridor. I-80 is not linked to the I-290/I-355 beltway. This causes adverse travel for traffic from the east. Westbound I-55 and I-80 interstate traffic wishing to proceed in a north/south direction within the Project Corridor must either continue past the Project Corridor to the I-55/I-80 junction located 8.0 kilometers (5.0 miles) west of the City of Joliet or use the non-continuous local roadway network.

The local roadway network consists predominately of two-lane roads of varying quality spaced on a 0.8 to 1.6 kilometer (0.5 to



12/18/00